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# Constantine of Tomorrow: Towards a shared vision

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## Synopsis

At the dawn of 21st century, Algeria has undergone major upheavals in its political, economic and social structures. The emergence of real vehicles of change give only one choice, that is to integrate into the global system, considered to be a milestone in any development and which was favored by the Algerian economic context in the early 2000s. These years were also marked by the country's commitment to sustainable development, introducing various laws and new planning instruments to reinforce the challenge of the living conditions for the inhabitants. It seems that a real "participation policy" was born in Algeria at minor scales including cities, but whose impact and evaluation remains in place!

The aim of this study is to highlight the participation of inhabitants, their roles, capacities and the obstacles encountered in creating positive changes in their urban spaces lived. An assessment study of some pilot projects for rehabilitation and urban improvement is considered, which involved five ZHUN (New Urban Housing Zone), developed with the participation of inhabitants in Algiers, Tizi-Ouzou, Bechar and Oran. The experience of urban improvement at Daksi district in Constantine is also treated. Our objective is to better understand the participation of the inhabitants, between theoretical discourses and concrete actions. What changes will there be for the Algerian city of tomorrow?!

**Key words:** citizen participation, strategic planning by targeted objectives / ZOPP, urban strategy, Algerian city, Constantine's future.



## 1. Introduction

The triggering event of Algeria political upheaval was undoubtedly the change of socialist course and the liberation of the market, originated from the mechanisms of globalization and their impacts. Algeria also was among the en-dorsers of all international conventions dedicated to sustainable developments as a guideline and forecast of any developmental project. Social and environmental interests have thus gradually emerged.

The government has therefore adopted decentralization, it was necessary to delegate to the "commune" base powers to freely manage local affairs. This indeed reflected a willingness to be in agreement with the expectations of the population: it was the proclaimed participation!

Despite the enthusiasm for political participation, the government was well aware of the gap existing between the legitimate expectations of inhabitants and their "bad experiences" due to inappropriate living environments.

## 2. The pilot projects of urban rehabilitation: cross-readings and fallouts

Many efforts have been made to alleviate the situation, but the results were often disheartening. The country thus launched from the years 2000, a number of studies, new experiments and many accomplishments. The experience of urban rehabilitation pilot projects of five ZHUN (New Urban Housing Zone) with the participation of their residents is presented in this work. The projects concerned different Algerian cities: Algiers, Tizi-Ouzou, Bechar and Oran.



Fig. 1 Geographical location of pilot projects across Algeria  
(Source : <https://fr.maps-algeria.com/l'alg%C3%A9rie-carte-physique>)

It was a part of a technical cooperation between Algeria and Germany, signed in 1999, the Algerian state has aided architects and specialized technicians training in Germany, specific to the projects of urban interventions in occupied sites and against the backdrop of initiation to strategic planning and the efficient participation of the actors concerned, specially the inhabitants.

The Algerian delegation has taken note of the ZOPP method (Ziel Orientierte Projekt Planung), a standard working method of planning by goals and targeted groups (whose fields of application can be vast), but which finds a good efficiency in the framework of actions carried out to impel, at the same time, a new, modern, reflexive, cautious, and negotiating urbanism, that is to say an urbanism of purpose and participation, according to François Ascher.

The first objective of the study is to try, through this pilot experiment, to understand the reality of the inhabitant's participation between theoretical speeches and concrete actions to extract the advantages, the drawbacks and the most important obstacles encountered by such corporation and to identify the ingredients of an eventual success and its propagation on a national scale.

So, we focused on the actions in Boumerdes, a part of the metropolitan area of the great Algiers, the project began in 1999 and interrupted in 2003 because of a earthquake. Despite the fact that this project could have marked the importance of such actions to modernize the urban and living environment; the results reflected the failure of the application. It remained disjointed in terms of space, time and scope.



Fig. 2 Pictures of the actions of the pilot projects; 1. works on the facades (city of amandiers - Oran) - 2. Meeting at the info point- 3. physical and moral participation of the inhabitants (Soummam city of Bab Ezzouar - Algiers) 4. City Frantz Fanon (The latter is located on the outskirts of Boumerdes at its northern end, built by DUCH in 1984, issued at OPGI in 1988).

( Source: Higher Institute of Management and Planning, Algiers,2000)

### 3. Exercise of "transcribing" the pilot experiment: the trials of changes for tomorrow's Constantine

The second objective of the study is to attempt an exercise of "retranscription" of the experience at Constantine, third largest Algerian city, in order to assess future trends at the heart of the contemporary issues facing it. Indeed, the city has been endowed during the last two decades with several projects to boost its different sectors.

Due to its strategic geographical position and its geo-economical context, Constantine has all the assets to be a pole of regional and national excellence. The projects launched initially appeared to be designed according to a new participatory approach that might undermine the spatial imbalances and boost the modernization and metropolisation of the city.

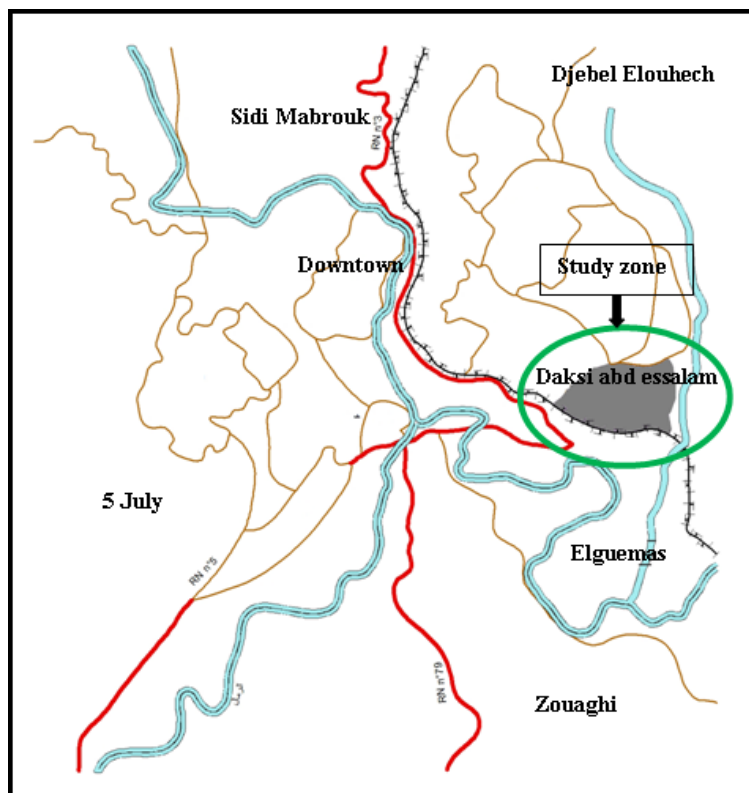


Fig. 3 Situation of Daksi district in Constantine

We chose the district of Daksi as a case study. It represents one of the first peri-urban extension, which dates from the 70s. It is an important urban unit, composed of a monotonous and repetitive collective housing that reflects the image of a degraded lifestyle. The approach that we have established, allowed us, first, to diagnose the state of the district, to later be able to project, in the light of the experiment studied, a collective vision shared around a project which will bring together all the stakeholders, especially the inhabitant!

### 4. Results and discussion

The survey conducted among the residents revealed their lack of information and the lack of transparency around existing projects and actions

throughout the city, in addition to the disinterest for the Daksi district, whose residents continue to experience daily inconveniences. Moreover, there was evidence of their good cooperation regarding the change in the current situation.

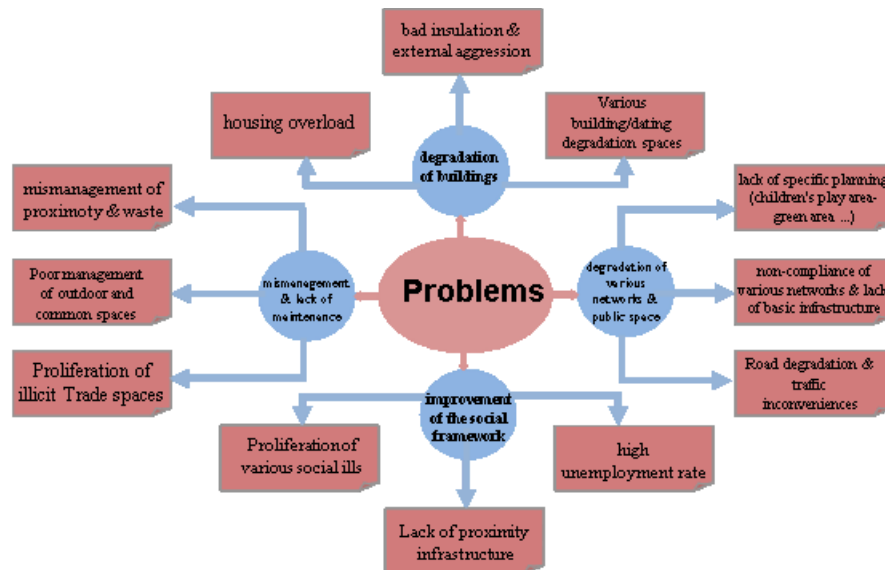


Fig. 4 diagram representing a problem tree<sup>1</sup>

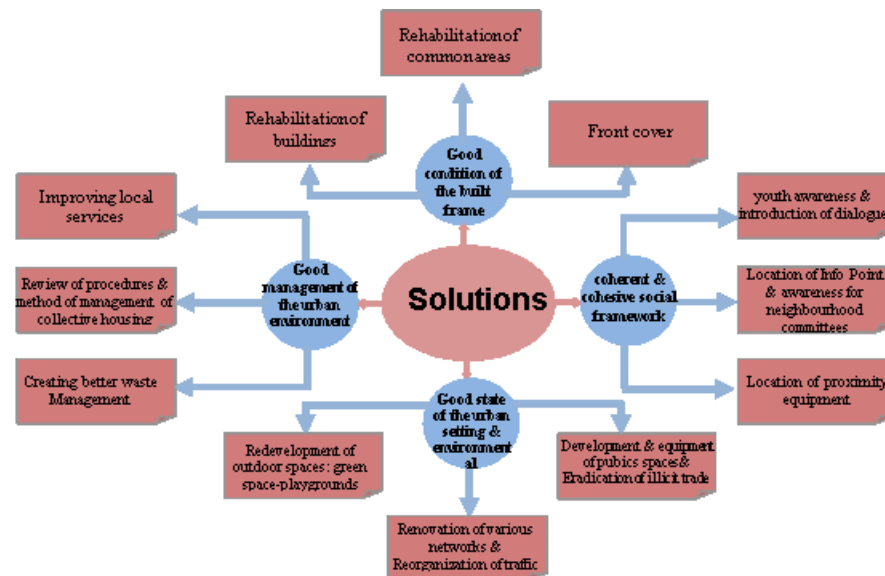


Fig. 5 diagram representing a tree of objectives<sup>1</sup>

The diagnostic work carried out using the ZOPP method steps, allowed us to define the problems and their cause-and-effect relationship, according to a sort of hierarchy. This methodological approach will make it possible to project the vision of a future situation, that is to say, once the current problems would have been solved. A distinction is then made between objectives, between desirable and achievable (Fig.5).

<sup>1</sup> The urban project and the participatory approach: case of Daksi district in Constantine, Master project of BenAthman Mahfoud and Bambarek Omar - Supervised by Ms. Author 1, 2017.

## 5. Conclusion

The participation and consultation of all actors in the city is an option that goes back from the 90s in Algeria, but still remains unknown in our practices. Concretely, the reading of the experiment on the pilot cities, as the Daksi district of Constantine, allowed us to deduce the importance of first impelling a new urban culture, raise awareness to the Algerian society, so it can structure itself in the city through the associative movement to impose its aspirations. The change should also include political and administrative systems, to manage a more coherent and rational Algerian city through the principles of participation, consultation and sustainability. The urban act will have to find its legitimacy within the framework of a global action articulated by a collective vision of the city of tomorrow. But between speeches ... and acts, gaps remain to be filled!

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## Biography

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**Dr Amel Ferial Boudjabi.** Born in 1971 in Algeria, she had the engineer degree in energetic in 1994 and doctorate thesis in the same field in 2010. Interested by the energy and building, she is a researcher in energy efficiency, renewable energy integration in buildings and smart cities. She is a dynamic member of a new association: Energy Cities Algeria, which is in the effective involvement of local communities through the adoption of measures of energy efficiency in Algerian cities for a sustainable development and a better future.